REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are currently pending.

On page 9 of the Office Action, claims 1-6, 11-16, and 22-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,144,989 (Hodjat).

Hodjat is directed to a method for processing a subject message by a network of agents, each of which has a view of its own domain of responsibility. The Hodjat interpreter unit provided to each agent determines whether a message is within a domain of responsibility of the respective agent. *See* Hodjat, col. 7, lines 34-39. Then, based on the determination by the interpreter unit, the agents receive and reply to the messages using a standard agent communication language. *See* Hodjat, col. 7, lines 7-17 and col. 13, line 60 - col. 14, line 1. Hodjat sequentially transmits or passes a message to the next agent in a path upon a determination that the message is not within a domain of responsibility of a particular agent.

According to the present invention and as defined by claim 1, for example, a role assignment part provides a role in accordance with attributes of an agent based on a policy, in an agent collaboration system.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over Hodjat, as Hodjat fails to disclose, "a role-assignment part having the policy storing part, *for providing a role in accordance with the attributes of the agent based on the policy.*" *See* Claim 1 of the Present Invention, emphasis added.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion on page 9 of the Office Action regarding Hodjat disclosing a role assignment part, column 7, lines 36-41 of Hodjat indicates that the interpreter unit 320 simply determines whether an input message is within the domain of responsibility of the agent. Thus, the interpreter unit 320 in Hodjat provides a decision regarding domain responsibility of the agent and does not provide a role, much less providing a role in accordance with attributes of the agent based on the policy. Moreover, no attributes of the agent are considered. Rather, the interpreter unit simply makes it decision on rules alone. *See* Hodjat, column 7, lines 34-36.

As the dependent claims depend from respective independent claims, the dependent claims are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented above.

Claims 7, 8, and 17-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hodjat in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,513,059 (Gupta).

Gupta is directed to a message blackboard system based on subscription of agents where an agent that subscribes to rules of a node is able to post and read a message posted on a particular blackboard. *See* Gupta, column 5, line 65 - column 6, line 3 and column 11 lines 29-39.

In contrast to the present invention, in Gupta, the agent is a passive agent. In other words, a role of the agent is not provided by the system. Rather, the user must provide an explicit command in direct management of the agent. *See* Gupta, column 6, lines 63-66. Therefore, Gupta does not teach or suggest a role assignment part for providing a role in accordance with the attributes of an agent based on a policy, as identified by the language of independent claim 1, for example.

Therefore, the dependent claims, via independent claim 1, are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented above for the independent claim, as none of the references, taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest the above-identified feature.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.
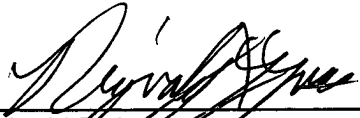
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 1/31/06   By: _____
                           Reginald D. Lucas
                           Registration No. 46,883

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501